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18 February 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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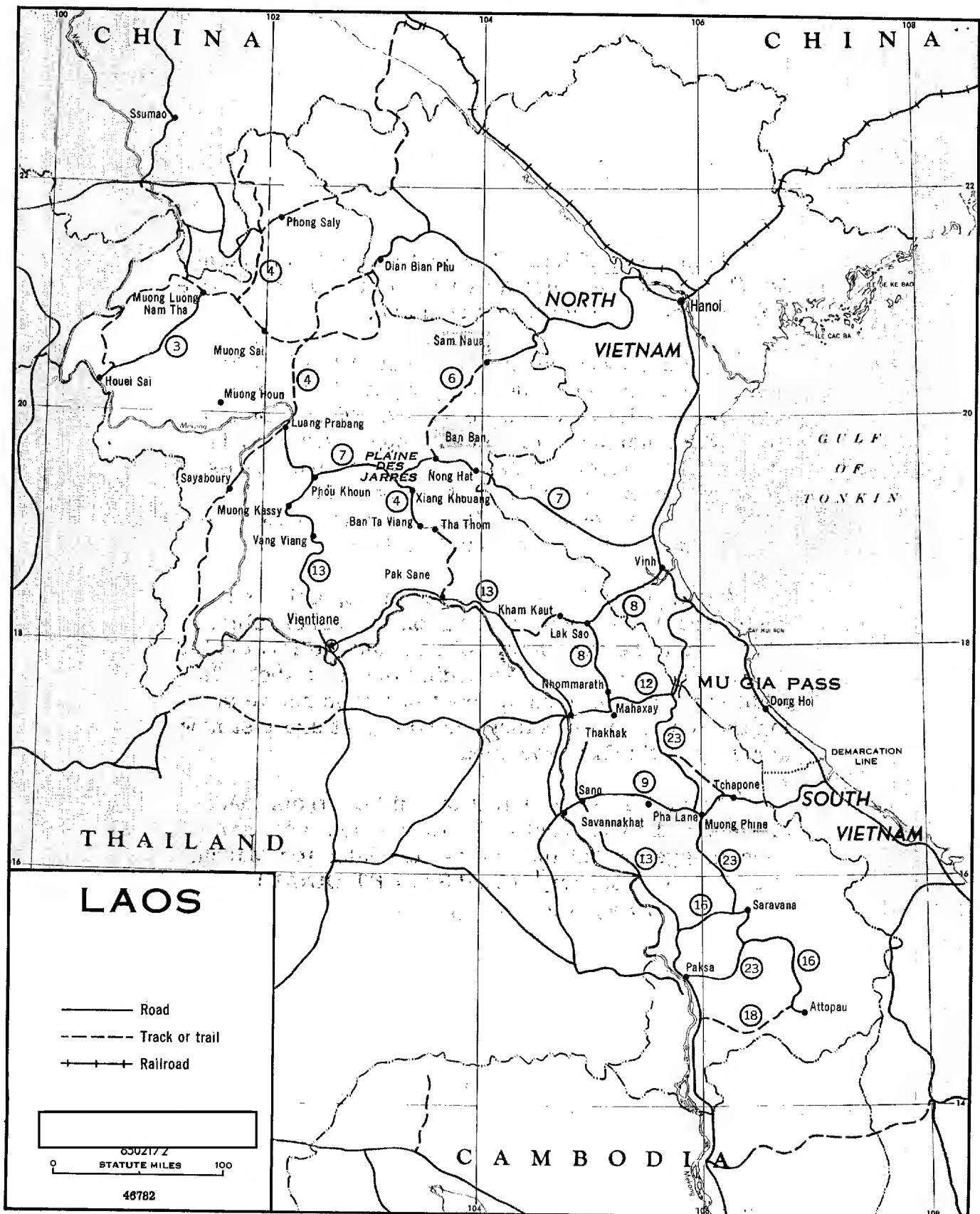
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18 Feb 65 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN Map

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Laos: The Communists are continuing to strengthen their military posture throughout Laos.

In a series of recent attacks in northeastern Laos, the Communists have cleared progovernment forces from several key positions between Ban Ban and Sam Neua town along Route 6.

These moves evidently have the objective of eliminating long-standing government pockets within the Pathet Lao "liberated areas." They also could be the first steps toward establishing Route 6 as an alternative to Route 7 for supplying the Plaine des Jarres area from North Vietnam.

In south-central Laos, the Communists are continuing to bring in troops and supplies. Since early this month [according to roadwatch reports] at least 170 trucks and possibly as many as 1,200 North Vietnamese troops [have moved into Laos along Route 12.]

These troops may be moving south to counter recent rightist advances in the area between Pha Lane and Muong Phine on Route 9. [On 14 February, a captured Pathet Lao soldier reported a large concentration of North Vietnamese troops a few miles to the northwest of Muong Phine] []

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(Map)

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USSR: [Apparent verification of a substantial reduction in the Soviet armed forces since 1960 was contained in a 17 February statement by Marshal Sokolovsky]

[He said that the total force strength was now 2,423,000. This figure is identical to the one Khrushchev cited in 1960 as his objective in reducing the armed forces from 3,623,000.]

[In part because of international tensions, Khrushchev's program was halted in mid-1961 after the strength had been cut back to about three million men. Faced with strong demographic and economic pressures, Khrushchev raised the issue of reductions again in early 1963 following the Cuban missile crisis.]

[If Sokolovsky's figure is accurate, it indicates that there has been a further reduction of almost 600,000. The brunt of the reductions was probably borne by the ground forces.]

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NOTES

Sudan: [The leftist-dominated government has stiffened its resistance to the demands of the non-Communist parties for reconstruction of the cabinet. While the parties still have the upper hand, their position is threatened by the difficulty of maintaining in the Khartoum area large numbers of their out-of-town tribal supporters. If leftist resistance continues, the non-Communist leaders may yet turn to demonstrations and violence]

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*Honduras: Reaction to blatant manipulation of votes in the 16 February Honduran constituent assembly election may lead to civil disturbances and violence. At an early stage in the counting the Lopez government suspended the running announcement of results of the balloting because it showed the traditionally minority Nationalists on the way to an obviously inflated victory. Official returns announced considerably later gave the Nationalists 35 seats to 29 for the opposition Liberals. Although the elections were apparently free of official interference in the larger cities, there are strong indications that intimidation and fraud were widely used in outlying areas.

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Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

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